

How to Use the ATLA Database

The ATLA Religion Database is the most comprehensive database for finding articles, essays and books in professional and popular venues in religious studies and theology. It allows you to search for publications related to your research topic with ease, from a computer anywhere on or off campus.

To access the ATLA database, go to the library website (www.scu.edu/library). Above the “OneSearch – Books, Articles, & More” search window, you’ll see a series of tabs: OSCAR – The Library Catalog, Databases, Journals & Magazines, and Streaming Videos / eBooks. Click on the “Databases” tab. The databases are accessible in two ways: by subject groupings or alphabetically.

- If you want to search by subject area, click on the arrow to the right of “Accounting” in the “Browse by Subject” window to see the full list of disciplines, then scroll down, select “Religious Studies,” and click on the box with an arrow to the right (↗). This will open up a list of databases we have in Religious Studies, including the “ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials.”
- Since you know the name of your database (ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials), you can use the alphabetical list by simply clicking on “A,” scrolling down to the title, and clicking on the box with an arrow to the right (↗).

Whichever way you get there, click on “ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials.” If you’re on campus, the database will open immediately. If you’re off-campus, you will be prompted to enter your SCU login information (Username and Password).

The screenshot shows the EBSCOhost search interface for the ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials. The interface includes a search bar with a dropdown menu for selecting a field (labeled 2), search buttons, and a search history link. Below the search bar is the 'Search Options' section, which includes search modes (Boolean/Phrase, Find all my search terms, Find any of my search terms, SmartText Searching) and a 'Limit your results' section. The 'Limit your results' section includes checkboxes for 'Linked Full Text', 'Scholarly (Peer Reviewed) Journals' (labeled 3), 'Publication Type' (labeled 4), and 'Exclude In-Process Records'. There are also checkboxes for 'Abstract Available' and 'Search within the full text of articles'. The 'Year Published from' field is set to 'to' (labeled 5), and the 'Language' dropdown menu is open, showing options like 'All', 'Afar', 'Afrikaans', and 'Arabic' (labeled 6). A 'Reset' button is located in the top right corner of the 'Search Options' section.

The search windows (#1) allow you to put in your search terms and then select a field (#2) directing your search further (e.g., author, title, keyword). At the initial stage of research, it sometimes helps to just leave the field in its default setting (“Select a Field (optional)”), because you don’t always know exactly where your search terms might show up, nor do you know what subject categories this particular database uses to catalogue entries. Whatever search terms you use, be prepared to try some synonyms and alternatives if your first search doesn’t yield much. Or, if your search returns too many records, you might want to add a second or third search term to narrow your search. Another trick is to collect more hits by using the asterisk key; for example, *feminis** will yield records with both “feminist” and “feminism” in the record.

Before we go any farther, there’s another feature of the database that can be useful. Look at the top of the image, in the center on the blue background, and you’ll see the words “Sign in to My EBSCO Host.” If you create a login id and password for EBSCO host (the supplier of the database) and conduct your search while logged in, any sources you save to your “folder” (also in that upper area) will be saved until you delete them. If you don’t do this, you might lose things you’ve collected if you log out, turn off or change computers. Since some of the citations you place in your folder will have pdfs of the actual articles, you might want to use your folder as an archive for your research throughout the quarter, and logging in is the way to do this.

Numbers 3-6 on the search window above indicate other ways you can narrow your search:

- #3 Click “Scholarly (Peer Reviewed) Journals”) so that all your results are of the proper professional quality.
- #4 In “Publication Type,” hold down the shift key while clicking “Article,” “Book,” and “Essay” in order to limit your search just to these types of records (at this stage, you don’t want abstracts or book reviews of books, but the articles and books themselves).
- #5 Type 1995 in the “Year Published from” window and the current year in the “to” window in order to pull up more recent entries. If those recent entries are professional, *they* should reference any important earlier works for you.
- #6 At the Language window, scroll down to English (unless you’re fluent in another language as well) to limit your results to those you can read.

Now you’re ready to search! Just hit the Search button (#7), and the database will find records that match your search parameters. And if that first search doesn’t pan out, don’t despair; just keep playing around with synonyms for your search terms until some results emerge.

Once you find a good source, click on it and see what subject headings *this* database uses for the terms of your search. If you click on the most relevant one, it will pull up all the results that this database has on your topic.

Your results will appear in a window that looks like this:

The screenshot shows the EBSCO database search interface. At the top, there are navigation links for 'New Search', 'Publications', 'Scriptures', and 'Indexes'. The search criteria are entered as 'syro-phoenician or canaanite and feminis*'. The results are displayed in a list format, showing two records (11 and 12) with their titles, authors, and publication information. The first record is 'De-colonizing ourselves as readers: the story of the Syro-Phoenician woman as a text' by Kinukawa, Hisako. The second record is 'Transforming encounter in the borderlands: a study of Matthew 15:21-28' by Schipani, Daniel S. Both records are identified as 'Essay' type publications. The interface also includes a 'Narrow Results by' sidebar on the left and a 'Limit your results' sidebar on the right.

At the top of the central results frame, you can see how many results your search returned (in this case, 29 records). Here are records 11 and 12. Both of these happen to be essays in books; you can tell that because the “Source” is a book title, with publication information and pages. If this were a journal article, you would have a journal title, volume number, year and pages instead. Since you’ll probably be scanning a few pages like this (each page contains ten records at a time), the best way to proceed is to scan the list looking for articles that sound interesting and use the critical method you’ve chosen (feminist criticism, in this case). For each such record, click the “Add to folder” link at the bottom of the record. This will keep a running list of your selected articles as you work through these results. When you’ve scanned your list, click on the word “Folder” in the blue menu bar at the top of the page to see all the records you’ve selected. From that page, you can print your results, save them to a flash drive, or email them to yourself.

One note: While these records have more than the required information you’ll need to prepare the bibliographic entries for a GPPM paper, the ATLA format of the information does not match the style we use for Graduate Students at Santa Clara University. That means you’ll need to reformat the entries for your bibliography and footnotes. Use the [GPPM Style Guide](#) for guidance.